

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Philip Taubman - New York Times Article (attached)

FROM:

Security Analysis Group

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE 29 December 1982

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

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OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

C/SAG

12/29/82

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30 DEC 1982

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9 JAN 1983

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ALSA

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DELRA

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NO WONDER REPORTERS
LAUGH AT US!
STRANGE GOINGS
ON.

K

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

DEC 21 1982

20 DEC 82
C/ops/PSI

DEC 21 1982

TO: DD/PSI



Office of Security

SUBJECT: PHILIP TAUBMAN
NEW YORK TIMES
16 DEC. 1982

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT
THE ATTACHED?

K

I have no knowledge of this.
M.L.

SAG Response ps
228

FEATURES/COLUMNISTS

NEW YORK POST

16 December 1982

Pg. 7

The Pentagon's latest war of nerves

By JAMES A. WECHSLER

CONFRONTING an incipient Congressional rebellion against the massive military budget, Defense Secretary Weinberger and his Pentagon associates are exhibiting symptoms of panic under fire.

They are retaliating with a war of nerves — against the American public and press.

That is the most plausible explanation of the extraordinary scene enacted at the Pentagon on Tuesday when 13 Washington correspondents were asked to sign an unprecedented "secrecy agreement" before receiving an off-the-record briefing on what a Defense Dept. spokesman called "the extent and trends of the growing Soviet threat."

The journalists creditably refused to comply with the remarkable terms of the pact, apparently including a signed pledge to tell neither their wives nor their editors what they had heard or where.

In a tantalizing anticlimax, the Pentagon emissaries thereupon backed down and agreed to abide by the conventional rules governing such sessions. The material furnished would be usable as "background material." No signatures needed.

This hasty retreat renders the whole performance even more suspect. The initial defense offered for the oath of super-secrecy was the claim that intelligence sources might be imperiled if this hot stuff leaked out.

But in view of the swift subsequent concession, it appears that the Pentagon's real concern was the concealment of its role in disseminating its

dark "intelligence" rather than protecting its alleged sources.

This bizarre sequence all began several weeks ago in the office of Defense Chief Weinberger, a leading salesman of the Pentagon's trillion-plus five-year expansion program and propounder of the grimmest view of U.S. vulnerability.

His invited guests were journalists regularly assigned to the Pentagon and he outlined to them his pessimistic appraisal of the allegedly ominous and mounting Soviet advantage in the arms race.

Some of those present suggested that his rhetoric was insufficiently supported by documentation and pressed for details. He said he would seek to arrange an "intelligence briefing" for them.

It was when they duly assembled on Tuesday for this enlightenment that they were startled to be told of the requirement for the signed vows of silence.

Then, as previously noted, the correspondents balked and the Pentagon emissaries, after recessing for strategic meditation, agreed to revert to the more familiar ground rules of "off-the-record" briefings.

So far none of those present has explicitly indicated that any large bombshells were dropped. Presumably, however, much of what was said will be increasing woven into Washington dispatches and commentary, with sinister overtones. Pro-Pentagon mouthpieces on Capitol Hill will embrace some of the "revelations" as their own.

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NEW YORK TIMES 16 December 1982 Pg. 19

Political Aim Vs. Secrecy

Request to Reporters At Briefing Explained

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15 — The Defense Department's request Tuesday that reporters sign a secrecy agreement before attending a briefing about Soviet military capacity added a new twist to a familiar Washington phenomenon: the declassification of intelligence information by the Government for political purposes.

News Analysis

Every recent administration, after weighing political interests against security considerations, has selectively disclosed intelligence secrets that it hoped would increase public support for Administration policies. In such cases, the concern of intelligence agencies that important sources and methods of obtaining intelligence might be compromised has been swept aside by the White House.

The secrecy agreement proposed by the Defense Department, senior Reagan Administration officials said today, was a flawed effort to reconcile those differences by insuring that reporters who received sensitive intelligence information did not disclose the means by which the Government obtained it.

As written, however, the agreement would have prohibited any dissemination of the information, even to the reporters' editors, a blanket ban that some intelligence officials, irritated by the Pentagon's handling of the issue, said negated the point of the briefing.

"The idea was to get the information out so people would understand how serious the Soviet threat is," a senior intelligence official remarked.

Said to Reflect Confusion

The annoyance of some intelligence officials apparently reflected confusion among national security officials about the aim of the Defense Department briefing and its format.

The idea of holding the briefing, according to both Defense and intelligence officials, was initiated by Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger several weeks ago after reporters asked for information to support the Administration's contention that the Soviet Union posed a grave military threat to the United States. A similar briefing on the Soviet military threat is often given to visiting heads of state.

There appears to have been general agreement that one aim of Tuesday's session was to show the correspondents who regularly cover the Defense Department that the Government had solid evidence of improved Soviet military capacity posing a threat to the United States and its allies in Europe.

"There really is an overwhelming body of evidence that shows the Soviets have pushed astride or ahead of the United States in crucial military areas," a senior intelligence official said. "Everyone who sees the briefing ends up saying, 'My God, they're doing a lot.'"

Both Pentagon and intelligence officials said they had hoped that the briefing might make the reporters more understanding of the Administration's charges about the Soviet Union, perhaps producing over the long run more sympathetic reporting about the increases in military spending proposed by President Reagan.

Photographs Especially Sensitive

The problem was that the information that officials felt was potentially most persuasive was also the most sensitive: data, particularly photographs, produced by satellites and other highly secret electronic systems.

A senior intelligence official today equated Tuesday's briefing with one given earlier this year about Soviet and Cuban involvement in Central America.

SECRECY... Pg. 2-F

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR 16 Dec 82 Pg.23

Where next for MX

Joseph C. Harsch

Be it noted that the Congress of the United States has not nixed the idea of building a new generation of nuclear missiles to balance any advantage the Soviets may be thought to have in such weapons.

Congress has said loud and clear that it thinks the idea of mounting a hundred of such weapons in a "dense pack" sounds about as silly as it previously thought was Jimmy Carter's proposal for sending 200 of them around thousands of miles of race tracks in Utah and Nevada.

The race track idea was scuttled (or was buried — if you prefer a non-nautical figure of speech) by the Mormon Church. The members of that religious body, who are plentiful in those states and not without political influence there, decided that they did not want MXs in their neighborhood where they might attract unwelcome attention from similar missiles mounted in the Soviet Union.

The "dense pack" idea was politically easier for any neighborhood. A hundred could be mounted inside the area of an existing air base. And the idea was to put "the pack" in Wyoming which has the necessary air base and where there are plenty of existing land-based nuclear weapons (Minuteman type) in fixed silos. Besides the population of Wyoming is small. It is 4.8 per square mile, the second lowest in the American union. The only other state with lower density is Alaska at 0.54.

But "dense pack" is gone now simply because it did not sound plausible to a majority in Congress. After they turned it down they learned that their doubts were shared by three of the five members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. The majority of the "chiefs" thought the money could better be used for more and better conventional weapons.

pons.

But Congress is willing, and has said so, to continue to provide funds for research and development on a new strategic weapon. There is nothing super special about the MX version which they blocked. It was merely one version of a new experimental missile (what MX means). Other versions are on the drawing boards. The special merit in the vetoed version of MX was that it was big enough to put into space 10 warheads of 350 kilotons blast each, or 7 of 500 kilotons. By dropping to fewer warheads, higher blast powers can be reached.

The MX was the US Air Force answer to the Soviet SS-18 which is rated at 8 warheads of 900 kt. or 10 at 500 kt. A later version is believed to be on the way with a rating of 10 heads at 750 kt. each. Smaller versions can be built, but to get the same number of warheads at any given blast effect more launchers would be necessary.

The real question is whether to keep a land-based deterrent. A mobile version of MX could be built for trundling around the countryside on railway flatcars or trucks. But people generally might feel about these the same way the Mormons felt about the Carter or "race track" version of MX in their own back yard. Any land-based missile tends to attract undesirable attention.

It is to be noted in this connection that the US, the Soviet Union, and China are the only countries with fixed, land-based, long-range missiles. The British and French have put all of their long-range weapons in the air or at sea. The Japanese long ago decided that if they ever do have such weapons they will definitely be kept at sea or in the air — not on land.

The essential fact is that a mobile weapon MX...Pg. 3-F

NERVES...

Continued

These are old Washington games. Any journalist who has ever worked in that city recalls the planted tales and rumors of emergency invariably accompanying the season for military appropriations.

But Weinberger's current campaign takes place in a peculiarly significant and sensitive setting. There is at least the beginning of a serious national debate on Pentagon financing.

Even some conspicuously conservative legislators have begun to ask whether American security would be better served by rebuilding our economic house than by subsidizing costly new experiments in overkill.

More than at any time in modern memory, Americans have been responsive to critical appraisal of the Pentagon's expenditure projections. In that atmosphere the counter-offensive was predictable.

Plainly linked to the new spasms of intimidatory warnings is a covert attack on the arms reduction talks. The hysteria is designed not only to create an appropriations stampede but to chill the nuclear-freeze movement.

The correspondents who refused to be bullied by the secrecy-oath demand set a worthy precedent for the inhabitants of Capitol Hill.

SECRECY...Continued

In that briefing, which was on the record, intelligence analysts made public photographs of new military installations in Nicaragua that the analysts said had been constructed by Cuba and the Soviet Union. The photographs were taken by high-flying American reconnaissance aircraft.

The key difference between that briefing and Tuesday's, according to intelligence officials, was the use of photographs taken by satellite. The Government has never made such photographs public, the officials said.

One reason is concern that publication of such photographs would reveal to the Russians information about the capacity and targets of the satellites. Another is a longstanding fear among

intelligence officials that the public disclosure of even one such photograph might open the door to requests for additional pictures under the Freedom of Information Act.

To safeguard the security of the satellite photographs used in Tuesday's briefing, the Central Intelligence Agency, which controls access to the pictures, insisted that reporters sign a secrecy agreement, according to both Pentagon and C.I.A. officials.

Concern on Sources of Data

The intent they said, was not to prohibit the dissemination of all the information about the Soviet military buildup but rather to insure that the journalists did not publish or broadcast anything that would pinpoint the sources of the information.

A result, to the consternation of some intelligence officials, was a blanket secrecy agreement that stipulated that the reporters never disclose "in writing, broadcast or any verbal discourse" the information they would receive. The reporters refused to sign it.

After extensive discussions between the correspondents and senior Defense officials, the Pentagon agreed to proceed with the briefing on the basis of a verbal understanding that some reporters initially interpreted as an agreement not to publish the information.

But reporters who attended the briefing said today that the conditions permitted them to disclose information from the briefing, provided they did not specify where it came from.